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Japanese literature

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PREFATORY NOTE.

This paper, read in part at a meeting of the Yokohama Literary Society, October 21st, 1891, has as its basis an article compiled by the present writer for the "Warner Library of the World Best Literature" recently published in New York, U.S.A. This paper, however, differs from the latter in the arrangement of its materials, and especially by the incorporation in it of much further exposition and of quite a number of new illustrative translations of Japanese writings. In putting this larger compilation into permanent form the writer wishes to say that his work should not be considered as being at all commensurate to his theme: it is merely a sketch-composition that may serve to show the general reader who does not have access to the special student's libraries somewhat of the kinds of literature, distinctively Japanese, that the Japanese have produced in their career as a lettered people. As a rule the writer has accredited at proper places the respective authors with the materials taken from their works, but he wishes here to acknowledge in general much unaccredited help gained from the studies of W. G. Aston, Esq., Prof. B. F. Chamberlain and Sir Ernest Satow.

JAPANESE LITERATURE.

BY CLAY MACCAULEY.

CIVILIZATION in Japan bears date from a time much more recent than that generally ascribed to it. The uncritical writers who first made Japan known to Western peoples accepted the historical traditions treasured by the Japanese as a record of fact. In the popular imaginings of the West, consequently, Japan is a land in which for at least twenty-five centuries an organized society, under a monarchy of unbroken descent, possessed of a relatively high though unique culture in the sciences and arts, has had place and development. But, during the last twenty years, competent students have discovered that Japanese civilization is comparatively modern. They cannot carry its authentic history much farther back than about half-way over the course that has been usually allowed for it. No reliance can be placed upon any date or report in Japanese tradition prior to near the opening of the fifth Christian century. Undoubtedly there was, as in all other lands, some basis for long-established tradition; but the glimpses of Japan and its people obtained through the Chinese and Korean annals of the early Christian centuries disclose the inhabitants of these islands, not with an organized State and society, peaceful, prosperous, and learned, but as segregated into clans or tribes practically barbarous and wholly illiterate; the clan occupying the peninsula east of the present cities of Kyôto and Osaka having then become leader and prospective sovereign. Certainly before the third Christian cen-

tury was well advanced there was knowledge whatever of letters in Japan and certainly too, for a long time after the art of writing had been brought into the country there was no popular use of knowledge of the art.

I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The knowledge of letters was in all probability introduced into Japan by Korean immigrants. Their language and writings were Chinese. In the fourth century there may have been among the Japanese some learners of this new knowledge. The Japanese claim positively that in the fifth century their national traditions, hitherto transmitted orally, were written down by adepts in the new art. But whatever may be true of the earlier centuries, it is perfectly clear that in the first half of the sixth century many scholars came to these islands from the continent, and were given positions of trust in the administration of the dominant government in Yamato; and that from the year 552 A.D., with the acceptance of Buddhism by those high in authority, and the full inflow of Chinese influence upon society, literature in Japan began to have permanent place and power.

But literature in Japan and Japanese literature are two quite different things. They are as unlike as the Latin writings of mediæval Germany and the German writings of later times. Japanese literature, which only is the theme of this paper,

does not date from the notable acquisition by the Japanese of a knowledge of letters. Not with that, nor for a long time afterwards, was any serious attempt made among them to express in writing the language of the people. In all probability this was not done until towards the end of the seventh century. The higher officials of State and of the Church—the new Buddhism—had a monopoly of learning; and their writings prior to the eighth century were, so far as is known, wholly Chinese in word and in form. But as the eighth century opened, a medium for the production of a Japanese literature was receiving shape. A kind of script devised from Chinese ideographs for the purpose of expressing Japanese speech was coming into use: that is, Chinese characters were being written for the sake of their phonetic values; their sounds, not their meanings, reproducing Japanese words, and sentences. In this so-called *manyōkana* the first material embodied was in all probability that for which verbatim transliteration was necessary, such as ancient prayers and songs. With this phonetic writing a literature distinctively Japanese was made possible, and had its beginnings.

ARCHAIC WRITINGS.

700-900 A.D.

1. KOJIKI.—The earliest Japanese literary product now existing, excepting possibly a small fragment of ancient chronicles called the "Kijiki," is a marvel-bearing summary of treasured tradition, known as the "Kojiki" or "Record of Old Things" written by imperial command and completed in the year 712. The "Kojiki" is a professed history of creation, of the Divine genesis of the imperial family of Japan, and of the career of this "people of the gods" into the early part of the century preceding its composition. To the student of Japanese literature the "Kojiki" is especially valuable, because in it are preserved the oldest known products of the purely literary impulses of the Japanese. Long before the Japanese could write, they could sing; and there is good reason to accept the songs given in the "Kojiki" as heritages from the much farther past.

Illustrative Translations.

WHY UNIVERSAL DARKNESS ONCE REIGNED.

[From the "Kojiki," compiled in 711-12 by Yasumaro, a high official of the Imperial Court. The "Kojiki" (Record of Ancient Matters) is the sacred book of Shintōism, and thus practically the Bible of Japan. The whole work has been translated into English by Basil Hall Chamberlain.]

As the Great and Grand Goddess Amaterasu [Sun goddess] sat in her sacred work-room, seeing to the weaving of the Grand Garments of the Gods, her brother Haya-Susano-o made a hole in the roof, and dropped down through it a Heavenly Piebald Horse which he had flayed backwards; at whose aspect the maidens weaving the Heavenly Garments were so much alarmed that they died. . . . At this sight was the Great and Grand Goddess Amaterasu so much terrified that, closing behind her the door of the Rocky Abode of Heaven, she made it fast and disappeared. Then was the whole High Plain of Heaven darkened, and darkened was the Middle Land of Reed-Plains [*i.e.* Japan], in such wise that perpetual night prevailed. And the clamour of the myriad evil spirits was like unto the buzzing of flies in the fifth moon, and all manner of calamities did everywhere arise. Therefore did the eight myriad Gods assemble in a Divine Assembly on the banks of the river Amenoyasu, and bid the God Omoikane devise a plan. And Her Grandeur Ame no Uzume, binding up her sleeve with the Heavenly Moss from Mount Ame-no-Kagu, and braiding the Heavenly Masaki in her hair, and bearing in her hands the leaves of the bamboo grass from Mount Ame-no-Kagu, did set a platform before the door of the Heavenly Abode, and stamp on it until it resounded. Then did the High Plain of Heaven tremble, and the eight myriad Gods did laugh in chorus. Then the Great and Grand Goddess Amaterasu was filled with amazement, and setting ajar the door of the Rocky Abode of Heaven, spake thus from the inside: "Methought that my retirement would darken the Plain of Heaven, and that darkened would be the whole Middle Land of Reed-Plains. How then cometh it to pass that Ame-no-Uzume thus frolics, and that all the eight myriad Gods do laugh?" To which

Ame-no-Uzume replied: "If we laugh and rejoice, 'tis because there is here a Goddess more illustrious than thou." And as she spake, their Grandeurs Ame-no-Koyane and Futotama brought out the mirror, and respectively showed the same to the Great and Grand Goddess Amaterasu, who, ever more and more amazed, gradually came forth from the door to gaze upon it; whereupon the God Ame-no-Tajikarao, who had been lying in ambush, took her by the hand and drew her out. . . . And so when the Great and Grand Goddess Amaterasu had come forth, light was restored both to the High Plain of Heaven and to the Middle Land of Reed-Plains.

AN ANCIENT LOVE SONG.

[This song, paraphrased, by the present writer from the literal translation of it by Prof. Chamberlain given in the "Kojiki," is one of the very oldest of extant Japanese versifications. An attempt has been here made to render into English the peculiar alternating five and seven syllable metre of Japanese verse].

The Deity of Eight-Thousand-Spears went forth to woo the Princess of Nunakawa in the land of Koshi and sang a song before her house. Then the Princess of Nuna-kawa, without yet opening the door, sang, from the inside, saying:—

*Yachi hoko no
Kami no mikoto
Nuye kusa no
Me ni shi areba
Waga kokoro
Urasu no tori so
Ima koso wa
Chidori ni arame
Nochi wa
Nadori ni aramu wo
Inochi wa
Na shise tamai so.*

Of Eight Thousand Spears
Thou the August Deity!
Like a drooping plant
I, a tender maiden, am:
And my fluttering heart
Like to bird upon the strand;—
Like the sanderling,
Timid bird that, startled, flees.
But the hour will come
When compliant it will be.
So, upon thy life,
Do not deign to yield to death.

2. NIHONGI—Within nine years after

the appearance of the "Kojiki" another compilation of national tradition was made, bringing the story of the nation down to the close of the seventh century. This work (year 720) is called "Nihongi" or Japanese Chronicles. But it is almost wholly Chinese in language and in construction. Its special value, considered as part of Japanese literature, lies in the preservation of some old Japanese verse.

Illustrative Translations.

WHY THE SUN AND THE MOON DO NOT SET TOGETHER.

[From the "Nihongi" (Chronicles of Japan) a rendering and amplification, for the chief in Chinese, of the "Kojiki," completed under the direction of Prince Toneri and Ono Yamaro in 720. The "Nihongi" is the popular embodiment of ancient tradition. The following extract is taken from the translation of the whole work made by W. G. Aston, Esq.]

Now when Amaterasu no Oho-kami (Goddess) was already in Heaven, she said "I hear that in the Central Country of Replains (Japan) there is the Deity Uke-mochi Kami (Goddess of Food). Do thou, Tsukiyomi no Mikoto (Moon God) go and wait upon her." Tsukiyomi no Mikoto, on receiving command, descended and went to the place where Uke-mochi no Kami was. Here Uke-mochi no Kami turned her head towards the land, and forthwith from her mouth there came boiled rice: she faced the sea, and again there came from her mouth things broad of things narrow of fin. She faced the mountains and again there came from her mouth things rough of hair and things soft of hair. The things were all prepared and set out on hundred tables for his entertainment. Then Tsukiyomi no Mikoto became flushed with anger, and said:—"Filthy! Nasty! That thou should dare to feed me with things disgorged from thy mouth." So he drew his sword and slew her, and then returned and made his report relating all the circumstances. Upon this Amaterasu no Oho-kami was exceedingly angry, and said:—"Thou art a wicked Deity. I must see thee face to face." So they were separated by one day and one night, and dwelt apart.

IN PRAISE OF THE DRAGON FLY.

[This ode, taken from W. G. Aston's translation of the "Nihongi," is ascribed to the Emperor

peror Yūriakū, A.D. 460. But, says Mr. Aston,—"It is not to be supposed that the Emperors actually composed these verses themselves, nor perhaps any others ascribed to them in the 'Nihongi.' The hand of the Court-poet is plain in the honorific epithets and forms given to him therein."]

The Emperor made a progress to Kahakami no Ono, where he commanded the forest wardens to drive the wild beasts. He lay in wait hoping to shoot them himself, when a gad-fly came swiftly flying. Then a dragon-fly flew thither suddenly, bit the gad-fly and went away with it. The Emperor was pleased at its attention and commanded his Ministers, saying:—"Do ye on Our behalf compose an ode in praise of this dragon-fly." As none of the Ministers made so bold as to compose an ode, the Emperor forthwith composed a short piece, saying:—

These tidings some one
Told in the Great Presence,
How in Yamato
On the Peak of Omura
Four-footed game was lying:
The Great Lord,
When he heard this,
Stood at his throne
Entwined with jewels,
Stood at his throne
Entwined with cloth:
Waiting for the game.
Whilst I remained
Waiting for the wild-boar;
Whilst I was standing
My arm in the fleshy part,
Was stung by a gad-fly:
But soon a dragon-fly
That gad-fly did bite.
Even a creeping insect
Waits upon the Great Lord.
Thy form it will bear,
O Yamato, land of the dragon-fly.

That in this wise
It should be famous
The Heaven-filling
Land of Yamato
Was called the Land of the Dragon-fly.

3. NORITO—Among the important remains of the beginnings of Japanese literature are some prayers used in the ritual (*norito*) of Shintōism. When these ancient expressions of this ethnic religion were first put into written form is not known. Their appearance as literature

however, certainly took place as early as the tenth century, and, says, Sir Ernest Satow in an article on the "Norito," it is "likely that the *norito* as we have received them, had been transmitted orally, without any material alteration, for generations before they came to be written down."

Illustrative Translations.

PRAYING FOR HARVEST.

[This *norito* is ascribed by Mabuchi to the reign of the Emperor Kōnin 770-781. It was celebrated on the 4th day of the 2nd month of the year. Sir Ernest Satow, from whose translation the following extract is taken, remarks that "whether this ritual date from the extremely vague epoch to which Mabuchi ascribes it, there seems sufficient internal evidence that it owes its origin to a very remote period of antiquity."]

He (the Mikado) says:—"I declare in the presence of the sovran Gods of the Harvest. If the sovran gods will bestow in many bundled ears and in luxuriant ears the late-ripening harvest which they will bestow, the late ripening harvest which will be produced by the dripping of foam from the arms and by drawing the mud together between the opposing things, then I will fulfil their praises by setting-up the first fruits in a thousand ears and many hundred ears, raising high the beerjars; filling and ranging in-rows the bellies of the beer-jars, *I will present them (i.e. the first fruits)* in juice and in ear. As to things which grow in the great-field-plain,—sweet herbs and bitter herbs; as to things which dwell in the blue-sea-plain,—things wide of fin and things narrow of fin, down to the weeds of the offing and weeds of the shore: and as to CLOTHES—with bright cloth, glittering cloth, soft cloth and coarse cloth will I fulfil praises. And having furnished a white horse, a white boar, and a white cock, and the various kinds of things in the presence of the sovran god of the HARVEST. I fulfil his praises *by setting up* the OFFERINGS of the sovran GRAND-CHILD'S augustness" (i.e. Amaterasu, the Sun goddess).

4. MANYOSHU.—The chief depository, however, of Japanese literature in its beginnings is the treasury of poems gathered during the Nara Era (completed

about 760),—the “Manyōshū” or “Collection of Myriad Leaves.” In these books the choicest utterances in Japanese verse then existing were garnered. They remain now an invaluable memorial of the intellectual awakening that followed Japan’s first historic intercourse with Korea and China.

Illustrative Translations.

URASHIMA TARO.

[From the “Manyōshū,” a collection of ancient verse compiled about 760, by Prince Moroe and the poet Yakamochi. This poem, relating the adventures of “the Japanese Rip Van Winkle,” is supposed to be much older than the eighth century. Translation by W. G. Aston.]

When the days of spring were hazy,
I went forth upon the beach of Suminoe;
And as I watched the fishing-boats rock to and fro

I bethought me of the tale of old :
[How] the son of Urashima of Midzunoe,
Proud of his skill in catching the *katsuwo* and *tai*,

For seven days not even coming home,
Rowed on beyond the bounds of the ocean,
Where with a daughter of the god of the sea
He chanced to meet as he rowed onwards.
When with mutual endearments their love had been crowned,

They plighted their troths, and went to the immortal land,

Where hand in hand both entered
Into a stately mansion, within the precinct
Of the palace of the god of the sea,
There to remain for everlasting,
Never growing old, nor ever dying.
But this was the speech which was addressed to his spouse

By the foolish man of this world :—

“For a little while I would return home,
And speak to my father and my mother;
To-morrow I will come back.”

When he had said so, this was the speech of his spouse ;

“If thou art to return again to the immortal land

And live with me as now,
Open not this casket at all.”

Much did she impress this on him ;
But he, having returned to Suminoe,
Though he looked for his house,
No house could he see ;
Though he looked for his native village,
No village could he see.

“This is strange,” said he ; thereupon this was his thought :

“In the space of three years since I came for from my home,
Can the house have vanished without even the fence being left ?

If I opened this casket and saw the result,
Should my house exist as before ? ”

Opening a little the jewel-casket,
A white cloud came forth from it
And spread away towards the immortal land

He ran, he shouted, he waved his sleeves,
He rolled upon the earth, and ground his feet together.

Meanwhile, of a sudden, his vigour decayed and departed :

His body that had been young grew wrinkled
His hair, too, that had been black grew white
Also his breath became feebler night by night
Afterwards, at last his life departed :

And of the son of Urashima of Midzunoe,
The dwelling-place I can see.

In the immortal land
He might have continued to dwell,
But of his own natural disposition :
How foolish was he, this wight !

A MAIDEN’S LAMENT.

[From the Manyōshū written by Lady Sakanōe, 700-750, daughter of a prime minister and wife of the Viceroy of the Island of Shikoku. Her writings are much praised. The poem, together with the five poems following all from the (Manyōshū), are translations by B. H. Chamberlain—parts of his admirable work the “Classical Poetry of the Japanese.”]

Full oft he swore with accents true and tender
“Though years roll by, my love shall ne’er wax old ! ”

And so to him my heart I did surrender,
Clear as a mirror of pure burnished gold ;

And from that day, unlike the seaweed bending
To every wave raised by the autumn gust,
Firm stood my heart, on him alone depending
As the bold seaman in his ship doth trust.

Is it some cruel god that hath bereft me ?
Or hath some mortal stolen away his heart ?
No word, no letter since the day he left me ;
Nor more he cometh, ne’er again to part !

In vain I weep, in helpless, hopeless sorrow,
From earliest morn until the close of day ;
In vain, till radiant dawn brings back the morning,
I sigh the weary, weary nights away.

No need to tell how young I am, and slender—
A little maid that in thy palm could lie :
Still for some message comforting and tender
I pace the room in sad expectancy.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

[Author unknown.]

WIFE

While other women's husbands ride
 Along the road in proud array,
 My husband up the rough hillside
 On foot must wend his weary way.
 The grievous sight with bitter pain
 My bosom fills, and many a tear
 Steals down my cheek, and I would fain
 Do aught to help my husband dear.
 Come I take the mirror and the veil,
 My mother's parting gifts to me;
 In barter they must sure avail
 To buy a horse to carry thee!

HUSBAND

An I should purchase me a horse,
 Must not my wife still sadly walk?
 No, no! though stony is our course,
 We'll trudge along and sweetly talk.

MY CHILDREN

[Written by Yamagami no Okura, governor
 of the province of Chikuzen,—700-750.]

What use to me the gold and silver hoard?
 What use to me the gems most rich and
 rare?
 Brighter by far—ay! bright beyond com-
 pare—
 The joys my children to my heart afford?

ELEGY

[Written by a poet named Nibi, of whom noth-
 ing is known.]

The gulls that twitter on the rush-grown shore
 When fall the shades of night,
 That o'er the waves in loving pairs do soar
 When shines the morning light,—
 'Tis said e'en these poor birds delight
 To nestle each beneath his darling's wing
 That, gently fluttering,
 Through the dark hours wards off the hoar-
 frost's might.

Like to the stream that finds
 The downward path it never may retrace,
 Like to the shapeless winds,
 Poor mortals pass away without a trace:
 So she I love has left her place,
 And in a corner of my widowed couch,
 Wrapped in the robe she wove me, I must
 crouch
 Far from her fond embrace.

TO A FRIEND.

[Written by Hitomaro, probably without a
 peer among Japan's ancient poets. Hitomaro
 was not of high rank among nobles, though of
 imperial descent. He became a provincial
 officer, and died, it is said, in the year 737.]

Japan is not a land where men need pray,
 For 'tis itself divine:
 Yet do I lift my voice in prayer, and say,
 "May every joy be thine!"

"And may I too, if thou those joys attain,
 Live on to see thee blest!"
 Such the fond prayer that, like the restless
 main,
 Will rise within my breast

ODE TO FUJI-YAMA.

[The name of the writer of this ode is not
 known.]

There on the border, where the land of Kai
 Doth touch the frontier of Suruga's land,
 A beauteous province stretched on either
 hand,
 See Fuji-yama rear his head on high!

The clouds of heaven in reverent wonder pause,
 Nor may the birds those giddy heights essay,
 Where melt thy snows amid thy fires away,
 Or thy fierce fires lie quenched beneath thy
 snows.

What name might fitly tell, what accents sing,
 Thine awful, godlike grandeur? 'Tis thy
 breast

That holdeth Narusawa's flood at rest,
 Thy side whence Fujikawa's waters spring.

Great Fuji-yama, towering to the sky!
 A treasure art thou given to mortal man,
 A god-protector watching o'er Japan;
 On thee forever let me feast mine eye!

ARCHAIC WRITINGS.

5. KOKINSHU—But the *manyōkana*, as
 a means for Japanese literary expression,
 was altogether too cumbersome and
 difficult for continued and enlarged use.
 Consequently, as writing in the language
 of the people increased, the ideographs
 that had been utilized for phonetic
 purposes became simpler and more con-
 ventional. At about the time the "Man-
 yōshū was finished, from among these
 ideographs two syllabaries, the *katakana*
 (757), and the *hiragana* (834), were
 formed, and a free writing of the Japanese
 language at last became possible. These
 syllabaries were gradually extended in
 use, and at the close of the ninth century
 gained honoured recognition as the medium
 for embodying Japanese speech by their
 adoption in the writing of the preface to,
 and in the transcription of, a new collec-
 tion of poems made under imperial order:
 the "Kokinshū," or "Ancient and Modern
 Songs" (905). These poems show at its

full fruition whatever poetic excellence the Japanese people have gained. They are to-day the most studied and most quoted of all the many gatherings from Japanese song.

Illustrative Translations.

SPRING.

[These verses and the three following stanzas are taken from the "Kokinshū," B H. Chamberlain's translation. The "Kokinshū" (Collection of Songs Ancient and Modern) was compiled 905-922, by Kino Tsurayuki and others. Sosei, the writer of these verses on Spring, was a Buddhist abbot living in the latter part of the ninth century.]

Amid the branches of the silvery bowers
The nightingale doth sing: perchance he
knows
That spring hath come, and takes the later
snows
For the white petals of the plum's sweet flowers.

SUMMER.

[Written by Henjō, who was a Buddhist bishop and one of the leading men of his time 830-890. Prior to his taking the vows of religion Henjō was prominent in court circles, and was married. The poet Sosei was his son.]

O Lotos leaf! I dreamt that the wide earth
Held naught more pure than thee,—held
naught more true:
Why then, when on thee rolls a drop of dew.
Pretend that 'tis a gem of priceless worth?

AUTUMN.

[By Chisato. Vice-governor of Iyo, etc.; a prolific writer,—850 900]

A thousand thoughts of tender vague regret
Crowd on my soul, what time I stand and
gaze
On the soft-shining autumn moon; and yet
Not to me only speaks her silvery haze.

WINTER.

[Tsurayuki, the writer of these lines, was probably the leading poet of his day,—880-950. He compiled the "Kokinshū." He was also the first master of Japanese written prose. His preface to the "Kokinshū" and his diary the "Tosa Nikki," marked the beginning of a new age in Japanese literature.]

When falls the snow, lo! every herb and tree,
That in seclusion through the wintry hours
Long time had been held fast, breaks forth
in flowers
That ne'er in spring were known upon the lea.

6. HYAKUNIN-ISSHIU — Among many collections of Japanese verse there is one

called the "Hyakunin-issshū," or "Single Songs of a Hundred Poets," which, though gathered probably as late as the thirteenth century, may be noticed here because it contains many excellent specimens of the versification, distinctive in Japanese literature, written in much more ancient times. Tradition ascribes the collection to Teikakeo (Sadaiye Fujiwara) a poet living at the time of the reign of the Emperor Shijō. One among several stories told of the collection runs that in the month of May, 1235 (the second year of Bunreki) the poet was asked by a relative, Utsunomiya Yasaburo, to write some poems for the decoration of *shōji* in his new country house at Ogura, a village near Kyoto. Sadaiye choosing them at random in memory and not on account of their exceptional excellence, wrote down this series of verses. Another tradition is that the poet chose the poems as decoration for *shōji* in his own house at Ogura. They consist each of a single stanza made up normally of but thirty-one syllables arranged in five measures; the first and third measures being, as a rule, in five, the second, fourth and fifth in seven syllables. This "Century of Songs" in time became well known; and now in the form of a game at cards the songs are familiar in most Japanese households.

Illustrative Translations.

I. AN EMPEROR'S SYMPATHY.

[The first ten of the "Hyakunin-issshū" are here given. They are from an unpublished translation of the work by the present writer. The metre of the Japanese originals, with a trochaic cadence, has been preserved in the translations, and, as far as possible, faithful renderings of their meanings made.]

The first poem is ascribed to the Emperor Tenchi, 668 672. It is supposed to be an expression of his sympathy with his subjects to whom had fallen the hard lot of being workers in the rice-fields. The temporary huts built by them at harvest time did not protect the laborers from the season's fogs and rains. The Emperor in imagination, had sought shelter in one of these huts.]

*Aki no ta no
Kario no to no
Toma wo arami
Waga koromete wa
Tsuyu ni nuretsutsu.*

In the shelter shed
Of an autumn rice-field, roofed
Loosely with coarse-rushes,—
While my garment's sleeves grow wet
With the moisture dripping through.

2. MOUNT AMA NO KAGU:—A PICTURE.

[Ascribed to the Empress Jitō.—690 696. In summer Mount Ama no Kagu, rising near Nara, was often white with clothing spread on it to dry by the people of the villages lying at its base. The Empress with that scene in mind wrote her song. It may be descriptive of a late fallen snow on the mountain.]

*Haru sugite
Natsu kinikerashi
Shirotae no
Koromo hosu teu (chō)
Ama no Kagu yama.*

Spring, it seems, has passed
And the summer come again,
For the silk-white robes,
So 'tis said, are spread to dry
On the "Mount of Heaven's Perfume."

3. A SONG OF LONGING.

[Written by Hitomaro Kakinomoto, who flourished at the close of the seventh and early in the eighth centuries. This song contains a good illustration of the "Pillow word" and "the Preface," so common in Japanese verse. The first three lines, or "part," of the song serve no other purpose than to introduce the longing lament of the last two lines, or "part." An instructive paper on the unique characteristics of Japanese verse, written by Prof. Chamberlain, is published in the fifth volume of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan."]

*Ashibiki no
Yamadori no o no
Shitari o no
Naka naka shi yo wo
Hitori ka mo nen.*

Ah! the foot-drawn trail
Of the mountain pheasant's tail,
Hung like drooping branch!
Through this long, long dragging night,
Must I keep my couch alone?

4. BEAUTY MADE PERFECT.

[Akahito of Yamabe, writer of this song, lived a few years later than Hitomaro, and shares with him the reputation of greatest excellence among the poets of ancient times. In these verses the poet intends to call to mind the lovely landscape of the coast of Tago, made complete in beauty as one of its parts, Mount Fuji, receives a covering of snow.]

*Tago no ura
Ni uchi idete mireba
Shirotae no
Fuji no taka ne ni
Yuki wa furitsutsu.*

When to Tago's coast
I my way have ta'en and see
Perfect whiteness laid
On Mount Fuji's lofty peak
By the drift of falling snow!

5.—THE STAG'S CRY IN AUTUMN.

[Written by Sarumaru by office Tayu (an office at a Shintō shrine). The song tells of the deepening of autumn's melancholy by the plaintive cry of a stag heard from the depths of mountain forests.]

*Oku yama ni
Momiji fumi wake
Naku shika no
Koye kiku toki so
Aki wa kanashiki.*

In the mountain depths,
Treading through the crimson leaves,
Cries the wandering stag.
When I hear the lonely cry,
Sad, how sad, the autumn is!

6.—A WINTER MIDNIGHT IN THE PALACE COURT.

[Yakamochi, by office Chūnagon, or Imperial Adviser, is much esteemed for his poetic ability. He flourished towards the close of the eighth century. In these verses he notes the far advance of the night, by the increase of frost on the timbers of the "Magpie Bridge." This bridge was a passage in the Court of the Imperial Palace to which the name, applied by popular superstition to the "Milky Way" of the skies, was given.]

*Kasasagi no
Wataseru hashi ni
Oku shimo no
Shiroki wo mireba
Yo so fuke ni keru.*

If the "Magpie Bridge"
—Bridge by skill of magpies spanned—
White with frost I see;—
With a deep laid frost made white;—
Late, I know, has grown the night.

7. A THOUGHT OF HOME.

[Written by Nakamaro of Abe at a farewell party given to him by some friends in China on his return to his home near Nara, Japan.]

*Ama-no-hara
Furi sake mireba
Kasuga nasu
Mikasa no yama ni
Ide shi tsuki ka mo.*

In the "Plain of Heaven,"
When I look, a moon I see.
In Kasuga land,
On the Mount of Mikasa,
Has the same moon there appeared?

8. A BUDDHIST'S QUESTION.

[The priest Kisen, writer of these verses, lived at Mount Uji not far from the capital city, Kyoto. The nearness in pronunciation of the *ushi* (gloom) to that of the word Uji (name of his home) prompted him to carry on his serious reflections by means of a pun, a device very common in Japanese verse. His home is pleasant, and peaceful. Why has it been so misnamed? Or, why, indeed, are men pessimists concerning the world?]

Waga io wa
Miyako no tatsumi
Shika zo sumu
Yo wo uchi yama to
Hito wa ifu (iu) nari.

At my humble home,
South-east from the capital,
Live the timid deer.
Yet, this pleasant world of mine, (ours,)
Men have named a "Mount of Gloom."

9. VANITY OF VANITIES.

[Written by Komachi, of Ono, a famous poet living in the middle of the ninth century, 834-880. She was also famous for her beauty. In this poem Komachi plays upon the resemblance between the sounds of the words *naga ame*, "long rain," and *nagame* "gazing," or "long looking." She associates also her beauty with a flower's colour. As the latter perishes under the long rains, so her beauty has passed while she has given her time to trivial things.]

Hana no iro wa
Utsuri ni keri na
Itazura ni
Waga mi yo ni furu
Nagame seshi ma ni.

Colour of the flower
Has already passed away,
While on trivial things
Vainly I have set my gaze,
In my journey through the world.

10. AT THE OZAKA BARRIER.

[Just before reaching Kyoto on the Tōkaidō, one passes Ozaka, an important hill road crossing a low ridge, through a narrow valley. In ancient times an imperial Guard House was placed there. Past that barrier travellers to and from Kyoto and the east must go. The poet Semimaru played upon the words *Ozaka* (Great Incline) and *Ausaka*, (Meeting Slope), in his picture of the busy scene there.]

Kore ya kono
Yuku mo kaeru mo
Wakarete wa
Shiru mo shiranu mo
Ausaka no seki.

This, see! This is where
Travellers who go or come
Over parted ways,
Friends or strangers, all must meet—
'Tis the gate of "Meeting-Hill."

AGE OF THE PROSE CLASSICS.

900-1200 A.D.

Japanese literature, having received vehicle adequate to its expression, and indorsement by the highest authority, with the opening of the ninth century entered upon an era lasting for nearly four hundred years; an era in which, with the co-operation of the general maturing culture of the empire, it passed through what is now known as its classic age. During these four centuries the capital of the empire lost the nomadic character it had had from time immemorial. With the removal of the imperial family from Nara in 794, the capital became fixed in Kyoto, to stay there for the next eleven hundred years. Through these four centuries the national development was for the most part serene. The ruling classes entered upon a career of high culture, refinement, and elegance of life that passed however in the end into an excess of luxury, debilitating effeminacy and dissipation. During the best part of these memorable centuries Japanese literature as *belles-lettres* culminated; leaving to after times, even to the present day, models for pure Japanese diction. The court nobles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had abundant leisure for the culture of letters, and they devoted their time to that, and to the pursuit of whatever other refined or luxurious pleasures imagination could devise. For instance, among the many notable intellectual dissipations of the age were reunions at daybreak among the spring flowers; and boat rides during autumnal moonlighted nights, by aristocratic devotees of music and verse who vied with one another in exhibits of their skill with these arts. The culture of literature in the Chinese language never wholly ceased; but from the ninth to the

thirteenth centuries the creation of a literature in the language of the people was the chief pastime of the official and aristocratic Japanese. Before the rise of the Shōgunate at the close of the twelfth century, no less than seven great compilations of the poetry of the times were made.

Especially notable among the works of this classic age are the prose writings. Critics call attention first to the diary of a famous poet, Tsurayuki: notes of a journey he made in 935, from Tosa where he was governor, to Kyoto the capital. This diary, the "Tosa Nikki," is said to be not only a simple and attractive story of travel, but to be the best extant embodiment of uncontaminated Japanese speech. Then there remain from the same epoch many "romances" or "tales," *monogatari*, now much studied and valued for their linguistic excellences. Probably the earliest among them, the "Taketori Monogatari," or "Story of a Bamboo Cutter" (850-950) which tells of the fortunes of a Moon-maiden exiled for a while in this world, is said to have, for purity of thought and language, no rival in Japanese or Chinese fiction. The "Ise Monogatari," or "Story of Ise" (850-950), has also admiring critics. Its prose and poetry are both studied as models to-day, its poetry being ranked next to that of the "Kokinshū." The "Sumiyoshi" and the "Yamato Monogatari" (900-1000), too must be named as choice tenth-century classics. The culmination of Japanese classic prose, however, as nearly all critics agree, was reached with the writing of the "Romance of Prince Genji," and the "Book of the Pillow." The "Genji Monogatari" (1003-4), and the "Makura no Sōshi" (1000-1050), both appearing early in the eleventh century. They are the work of two ladies of the court, Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon. The "Genji" romance leads all works in Japanese literature in the fluency and grace of its diction; but the "Pillow Book" is said to be matchless in the ease and lightness and general artistic excellence of its literary touch. These works stand as the consummate achievements of the classic age in prose. They mark also the end of this memor-

able literary epoch. At the close of the twelfth century Japan became a battlefield for civil wars. War and the interests of war became supreme. Learning and letters were gradually relegated to priests, and literature soon ceased to exist. The Chinese language again became the chief vehicle of whatever literary work was done.

Illustrative Translations.

HOW THE SEA WAS CALMED.

[From the "Tosa Nikki;" W. G. Aston's translation. Tsurayuki traced his descent to one of the Mikados. He held office his life throughout. This diary was written in 935, on the return journey from Tosa, a province he had been governing, to Kyōto the capital.]

Meanwhile a sudden gale sprung up, and in spite of all our efforts we fell gradually to leeward, and were in great danger of being sent to the bottom. "This god of Sumiyoshi," said the captain, "is like other gods. What he desires is not any of the fashionable articles of the day. Give him *nusa** as an offering." The captain's advice was taken, and *nusa* were offered; but as the wind, instead of ceasing, only blew harder and harder, and the danger from the storm and sea became more and more imminent, the captain again said, "Because the august heart of the god is not moved for *nusa*, neither does the august ship move: offer to him something in which he will take greater pleasure." In compliance with this advice I thought what it would be best to offer. "Of eyes I have a pair; then let me give to the god my mirror, of which I have only one." The mirror was accordingly flung into the sea, to my very great regret. But no sooner had I done so than the sea itself became as smooth as a mirror.

DISCOVERY OF THE ISLE OF IMMORTAL YOUTH, MOUNT HŌRAI.

[From the "Taketori Monogatari," 850-950; translated by F. Victor Dickins. Authorship unknown, but ascribed to one Minamoto Jun. Materials of the story taken from Chinese and Indian sources. This extract is part of a description of the wanderings of a Japanese Ulysses.]

Then the Ancient fell to busying himself with putting the chamber in order, and after a while

* Pieces of silk carried by worshippers as temple offerings.

went out and accosted the Prince again, saying, "Your servant would fain know what manner of place it may be where grows this tree,—how wonderful a thing it is, and lovely and pleasant to see!" And the Prince answered: "The year before yester-year, on the tenth of the second month, we took boat at Naniwa and sculled out into the ocean, not knowing what track to follow; but I thought to myself, what would be the profit of continuing life if I might not attain the desire of my heart; so pressed we onwards, blown where the wind listed. If we perished even, what mattered it? While we would make what way we could over the sea plain, and perchance thus might we somehow reach the mountain men do call Hōrai. So resolved, we sculled further and further over the heaving waters, until far behind us lay the shores of our own land. And as we wandered thus, now deep in the trough of the sea, we saw its very bottom; now blown by the gale we came to strange lands, where creatures like demons fell upon us and were like to have slain us. Now, knowing neither whence we had come nor whither we tended, we were almost swallowed up by the sea; now, failing of food we were driven to live upon roots; now again, indescribably terrible beings came forth and would have devoured us; or we had to sustain our bodies by eating of the spoil of the sea. Beneath strange skies were we, and no human creature was there to give us succour; to many diseases fell we prey as we drifted along, knowing not whitherwards, and so tossed we over the sea-plain, letting our boat follow the wind for five hundred days. Then about the hour of the dragon, four hours ere noon, saw we a high hill looming faintly over the watery waste. Long we gazed at it, and marvelled at the majesty of the mountain rising out of the sea. Lofty it was and fair of form, and doubting not it was the mountain we were seeking, our hearts were filled with awe. We plied the oar and coasted it for two days or three, and then we saw a woman arrayed like an angel come forth out of the hills, bearing a silver vessel which she filled with water. So we landed and accosted her, saying, "How call men this mountain?" and she said, "Tis

Mount Hōrai;" whereat our hearts were filled with joy.

THE MAID OF UNAI.

[From the "Yamato Monogatari," 900-1000 translated by B. H. Chamberlain. The author of these "Stories of Yamato" (Old Japan) unknown, but said to have been, in part at least the retired Emperor Kwanzan, 983-985. The stories contain nearly three hundred poems.]

In days of old there dwelt a maiden in the land of Settsu, whose hand was sought in marriage by two lovers. One, Mubara by name was a native of the same country-side; the other, called Chinu, was a native of the land of Idzumi. The two were alike in years, alike in face, in figure, and in stature; and whereas the maiden thought to accept the wooing of him that should the more dearly love her, lo! it fell out they both loved her with the same love. No sooner faded the light of day than both came to do their courting, and when they sent her gifts the gifts were quite alike. Of neither could it be said that he excelled the other, and the girl meanwhile felt sick at heart. Had they been men of luck-warm devotion, neither would ever have obtained the maiden's hand; but it was because both of them, day after day and month after month, stood before the cottage gate and made evident their affection in ten thousand different ways, that the maiden pined with a divided love. Neither lover's gifts were accepted, and yet both would come and stand bearing in their hands gifts. The maiden had a father and a mother, and they said to her—"Sad is it for us to have to bear the burden of thine unseemly conduct in thus carelessly from month to month and from year to year causing others to sorrow. If thou wilt accept the one, after a little time the other's love will cease. The maiden made answer, "That likewise was my thought. But the sameness of the love of both has made me altogether sick at heart. Alas! what shall I do?"

Now in olden days the people dwelt in houses raised on platforms built out into the river Ikuta. So the girl's father and mother summoning to their presence the two lovers, spake thus: "Our child is pining with a love divided by the equal ardour of your worships. But to day we intend, by whatever means, to fix her

choice. One of you showeth his devotion by coming hither from a distant home : the other is our neighbour, but his love is boundless. This one and that are alike worthy of our pitying regard." Both the lovers heard these words with respectful joy ; and the father and mother continued :—"What we have further in our minds to say is this : Floating on our river is a water-bird. Draw your bows at it ; and to him that shall strike it will we have the honour to present daughter." "Well thought!" replied the lovers twain ; and drawing their bows at the same instant, one struck the bird in the head and the other in the tail, so that neither could claim to be the better marksman. Sick with love, the maiden cried out :

"Enough, enough! 'Yon swiftly-flowing
wave
Shall free my soul from her long anxious
strife ;
Men call fair Settsu's stream the stream
of life,
But in that stream shall be the maiden's
grave!"

and with these words, let herself fall down into the river from the platform that overlooked it.

While the father and mother, frantic with grief, were raving and shouting, the two lovers plunged together into the stream. One caught hold of the maiden's foot and the other of her hand, and the three sank together and perished in the flood. Terrible was the grief of the girl's father and mother, as, amid tears and lamentations, they lifted her body out of the water and prepared to give it burial. The parents of the two lovers likewise came to the spot, and dug for their sons graves beside the grave of the maiden. But the father and mother of him that dwelt in the same country-side raised an outcry, saying, "That he who belongs to the same land should be buried in the same place, is just. But how shall it be lawful for an alien to desecrate our soil?" So the parents of him that dwelt in Idzumi laded a junk with Idzumi earth, in which, having brought it to the spot, they laid their son. And to this day the maiden's grave stands there in the middle, and the graves of her lovers on either side.

COURT FESTIVALS IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

[From the "Makura no Sōshi," 1000-1050 ;

W. G. Aston's translation. The author, Sei Shōnagon, was a direct descendant from a Mikado, and was for some time chief lady-in-waiting to the Empress. With the death of her mistress in the year 1000 she left the court, entered a convent, and there composed this "Pillow Book," a masterpiece in Japanese prose.]

What delightful anniversaries festivals are ! Each one brings its special pleasures, but none to my mind is so enjoyable as New Year's Day. It is early spring-time then, when the weather is settled, and the morning breaks serenely. A quiet haze is spread over hill and dale, which the sun disperses when he rises, and shows the dewdrops sparkling in his rosy beams. The world seems glad and happy, and in the shining faces of the neighbours, glowing from the frosty air of morning, content and peace is plainly written. How pleasant it is to watch them as they pass, in holiday attire, intent on making their congratulations to their master, and ignorant the while that their very lightness of heart is an unconscious compliment to themselves.

It is the 7th day of the month when people, tempted by the fineness of the weather, go out in company to pick the *wakana* (wild pot-herbs). The snow is off the ground and great is the excitement amongst the ladies of the court, who have so seldom the opportunity of a country trip. What fun to watch the farmers' wives and daughters, arrayed in all their hoarded finery, and riding in their wagons (made clean for the occasion) as they come to see the races in the court-yard of the palace. It is most diverting to observe their faces from our grated windows. How prim and proper they appear, all unconscious of the shock their dignity will get when the wagon jolts across the huge beam at the bottom of the gate, and knocks their pretty heads together, disarranging their hair, and worse still, mayhap, breaking their combs. But that is after all a trifle when compared to their alarm if a horse so much as neighs. On this account the gallants of the court amuse themselves by slyly goading the horses with spear and arrow point, to make them rear and plunge, and frighten the wenches home in fear and trembling. How silly too the men-at-arms look, their foolish faces painted

with dabs of white here and there upon their swarthy cheeks, like patches of snow left on a hillside from a thaw.

Then there is the 15th of the first month, when appointments for the next four years are made. How eagerly candidates for office rush here and there through falling snow and sleet, with their memorials in their hands? Some have the jaunty air and confidence of youth; but others, more experienced, are weary and dejected-looking. How the old white-headed suitors crave an audience of the ladies of the palace, and babble to them of their fitness for the places they seek. Ah! little do they suspect when they have turned their backs what mirth they have occasioned! How the ladies mimic them—whining and drawing!

ON THE CHARACTER OF WOMEN.

[From the 'Genji Monogatari,' 1004, paraphrased by Kenchō Suyematsu. This romance of Prince Genji was written by Murasaki Shikibu, a lady of noble birth and a member of the great family of the Fujiwara, who were at the time practically rulers of Japan. It is said that not only does the classic literature of Japan find consummate illustration in this story, but that the history of the time, especially in its social characteristics, is here most vividly set forth.]

"How varied are the characters and the dispositions of women! Some who are youthful and favoured by nature strive almost selfishly to keep themselves with the utmost reserve. If they write harmlessly and innocently, yet at the same time they are choice in their expressions, which have delicate touches of bewitching sentiment, this might possibly make us entertain a suddenly conceived fancy for them; yet they would give us but slight encouragement.

"Among characters differing from the above, some are too full of sentimental sweetness; whenever occasion offers them romance they become spoilt. Such would be decidedly better if they had less sentiment and more sense.

"Others, again, are singularly earnest, indeed—in the performance of their domestic duty; and such, with their hair pushed back, devote themselves like household drudges to household affairs. Man, whose duties generally call him from home all the day, naturally hears and sees the social movements both of public

and private life, and notices different things, both good and bad. Of such things he would not like to talk freely with strangers; but only with some one closely allied to him. Indeed, a man may have many things in his mind which cause him to smile or to grieve. Occasionally something of a political nature may irritate him beyond endurance. These matters he would like to talk over with his fair companion, that she might soothe him and sympathize with him. But a woman as above described is often unable to understand him, or does not endeavor to do so; and this only makes him more miserable. At another time he may brood over his hopes and aspirations; but he has no hope of solace. She is not only incapable of sharing these with him, but might carelessly remark, 'What ails you?' How severely would this try the temper of a man!

"If then we clearly see all these, the only suggestion I can make is that the best thing to do is to choose one who is gentle and modest, and strive to guide and educate her according to the best ideal we may think of. This is the best plan; and why should we not do so? Our efforts would not be surely all in vain. But no! A girl whom we thus educate, and who proves to be competent to bear us company, often disappoints us when she is left alone. She may then show her incapability, and her occasional actions may be done in such an unbecoming manner that both good and bad are equally displeasing. Are not all these against us men? Remember, however, that there are some who may not be very agreeable at ordinary times, yet who flash occasionally upon us with a potent and almost irresistible charm."

Thus Suma-no-Kami, though eloquent, not having come to one point or another, remained thoughtful for some minutes, and again resumed.

"After all, as I have once observed, I can only make this suggestion: That we should not too much consider either birth or beauty, but select one who is gentle and tranquil, and consider her to be best suited for our last haven of rest. If in addition she is of fair position, and is blessed with sweetness of temper, we should be delighted with her, and, not trouble

ourselves to search out or notice any trifling deficiency. And the more so as, if her conscience is clear and pure, calmness and serenity of features can naturally be looked for.

"There are women who are too diffident and too reserved, and carry their generosity to such an extent as to pretend not to be aware even of such annoyances as afford them just grounds of complaint. A time arrives when their sorrows and anxieties become greater than they can bear. Even then, however, they cannot resort to plain speaking and complain; but instead thereof they will fly away to some remote retreat among the mountain hamlets, or to some secluded spot by the seaside, leaving behind them some painful letter or despairing verses, and making themselves mere sad memories of the past. . . .

"Worse than this, the woman—led astray perhaps by ill advice—may even be beguiled into more serious errors. In the depth of her despairing melancholy she will become a nun. Her conscience when she takes the fatal vow may be pure and unsullied, and nothing may seem able to call her back again to the world which she forsook. But as time rolls on, some household servant or aged nurse brings her tidings of the lover who has been unable to cast her out of his heart, and whose tears drop silently when he hears aught about her. Then when she hears of his affections still living, and his heart still yearning, and thinks of the uselessness of the sacrifice she has made voluntarily, she touches the hair on her forehead, and she becomes regretful. She may indeed do her best to persevere in her resolve, but if one single tear bedews her cheek she is no longer strong in the sanctity of her vow. Weakness of this kind would be in the eyes of Buddha more sinful than those offenses which are committed by those who never leave the lay circle at all, and she would eventually wander about in the 'wrong passage.'

"But there are also women who are too self-confident and obtrusive. These, if they discover some slight inconsistency in men, fiercely betray their indignation and behave with arrogance. A man may show a little inconsistency occasionally, but yet his affection may remain;

then matters will in time become right again, and they will pass their lives happily together. If therefore the woman cannot show a tolerable amount of patience, this will but add to her unhappiness. She should, above all things, strive not to give way to excitement; and when she experiences any unpleasantness, she should speak of it frankly but with moderation. And if there should be anything worse than unpleasantness, she should even then complain of it in such a way as not to irritate the man. If she guides her conduct on principles such as these, even her very words, her very demeanour, may in all probability increase his sympathy and consideration for her. One's self-denial and the restraint which one imposes upon one's self, often depend on the way in which another behaves to us. The woman who is too indifferent and too forgiving is also inconsiderate. Remember, 'The unmoored boat floats about.' Is it not so?"

To no-Chiūjō quickly nodded assent, as he said:—"Quite true! A woman who has no strength of emotion, no passion of sorrow or of joy, can never be a holder of us. Nay, even jealousy, if not carried to the extent of undue suspicion, is not undesirable. If we ourselves are not in fault, and leave the matter alone, such jealousy may easily be kept within due bounds. But stop," added he suddenly; "some women have to bear, and do bear, every grief that they may encounter, with uncomplaining and suffering patience."

So said Tō no-Chiūjō, who implied by this allusion that his sister was a woman so circumstanced. But Genji was still dozing, and no remark came from his lips.

MEDIÆVAL LITERATURE.

(1200-1600 A. D.)

From the twelfth century to the rise of the Tokugawa Shōgunate in the seventeenth century, the empire passed through its Middle or "Dark" Age. During these five centuries, although numerous writings for political and religious purposes appeared, but little work of importance for the history of Japanese literature was produced. Some collections of verse may be excepted from this judgment.

Two bits of prose writing, the "Hōjōki" (1212?) of Chomei and the "Tsure-zure gusa" (1345?) of Yoshida Kenkō have qualities that make them especially noteworthy. The "Hōjōki,"—the meditations of a hermit priest in a mountain hut, written near the beginning of the thirteenth century,—simple, fluent, vivacious, and yet forcible in style,—are esteemed as preserving for the language an excellence like that of the "Makura no Sōshi." And the "Tsure-zure gusa," or "Weeds of Idleness," short essays composed in the fourteenth century, is the last notable example of the form and speech that gave to the classic age its commanding position in the development of pure Japanese literature. The "Weeds of Idleness," moreover, has the distinction of opening the way for the literary speech that came into full development in the seventeenth century, and has since been the language of the literature of Japan. In these essays, Chinese words were set into Japanese forms of speech without doing violence to Japanese modes of expression. The "Tsure-zure gusa" has thereby the double merit of embodying the highest literary excellence of a past age, and the beginning of a new linguistic development.

Further, the mediæval centuries are of importance to the literature of Japan from the development in them of a form of musical drama called the *Nō no Uta* originating in the ancient sacred dances and temple amusements cared for by the priests,—the only men of letters of the time. These lyric plays are dateless and anonymous, but they have considerable literary worth. Accompanying the severer sacred drama and serving as interludes for them, many comedies, *kyōgen*, written in the ordinary colloquial of the day, were produced. These comic writings possess small literary but much linguistic value.

Illustrative Translations.

MEDITATIONS OF A HERMIT.

[From the "Hōjōki," 1212, translated by J. M. Dixon. The writer, Kamo no Chomei, the son of a priest, disappointed with life, sought seclusion from the world in a ten-foot-square hut (hōjō), on Mt. Ohara. There he made a

record of his thoughts, this "Hōjōki," now valued as a literary treasure.]

The water incessantly changes as the stream glides calmly on; the spray that hangs over a cataract appears for a moment only to vanish away. Such is the fate of mankind on this earth and of the houses in which they dwell. If we gaze at a mighty town we behold a succession of walls, surmounted by tiled roofs which vie with one another in loftiness. These have been from generation to generation the abodes of the rich and of the poor, and yet none resist the destructive influence of time. Some are allowed to fall into decay; others are replaced by new structures. Their fate is shared by their inmates. If after the lapse of a long period we return to a familiar locality, we scarcely recognize one in ten of the faces we were accustomed to meet long ago. In the morning we behold the light, and next evening we depart for our long home. Our destiny resembles the foam on the water. Whence came we, and whither are we tending? What things vex us, what things delight us, in this world of unreality? It is impossible truly to say. A house and its occupant, changing perpetually, may well be compared to a morning-glory flecked with dew. Sometimes it happens that the dew evaporates and leaves the flower to die in the first glare of day; sometimes the dew survives, the flower, but only for a few hours; before sunset the dew also has disappeared.

VAGRANT REVERIES.

[From "Tsure-zure Gusa," 1345; translated by C. S. Eby. Yoshida Kenkō, the writer of these "Weeds of Idleness," was a court official, who upon the death of the Mikado entered the priesthood and became a monk. He was poet as well as prose writer; was also a profound student of philosophy and of the Chinese classics.]

If man did not disappear like the dew of the field, or vanish like the mists of Toribe hills, and continued his stay upon earth, then tenderness of heart, sympathy, pity, would perish. The unsettled changeableness of the present sublunary life is vastly to be preferred.

Of all living creatures man is the most long-lived. The ephemeral gnat comes into exist-

ence in the morning, and vanishes ere evening falls. The summer cicada knows never a spring or autumn. One year of a man's life in comparison with these things must be considered laborious and long. A life of a thousand years, if passed in discontent and clung to, would seem to fly away as a dream of the night. What profit is there in clinging to a life which results in deformity, and cannot after all continue forever? Longevity produces shame and disgrace. It is better to die before forty years are passed, and thus escape the shame of decrepitude.

A quiet talk with one perfectly of your own turn of mind is a very pleasant thing. It would give one great delight to speak freely with such a friend about things that are pleasant, and about the instability of earthly joys. But no such friendship is possible.

The changes of the seasons are full of things which arouse our souls to deep emotion.

To sit opposite to and converse with a man like oneself in every respect would be as good as sitting by oneself. Two persons in many respects alike could sometimes raise a dispute. And that would be very useful in dissipating the gloomy thoughts of solitude.

To spread open your books under the light of your lamp, and hold communion with men of bygone ages, is surpassingly comfortable.

Japanese poetry is especially charming. Even the toil of an awkward peasant or of a woodman, expressed in poetic form, delights the mind. The name of the terrible wild boar also, when styled "*fusui no toki*," sounds elegant:

Every one says that the autumn is the most affecting season of the year. Perhaps so. But the springtime transformations of nature are more delightful, giving buoyancy to the heart. The warbling of cheery songsters gives signal for the full outburst of spring-tide glory. The wild grass sprouts under the hedge in answer to the mild rays of the kindly sun. The spring advances and the mists melt into translucent air. The flowers seem ready to burst into bloom. But rain and wind still make their reckless attacks,

and flowers are shattered to our dismay. The changefulness of the days before the leaves are all green cause us much distress. The past is brought back to our loving memories more by the fragrance of the plum than by the *hana tachibana*,* which is noted in this respect. The pure appearance of the *yamabuki*† and the uncertain condition of the *fuji*‡ cannot be missed without pain.

The heart of man has been compared to flowers; but unlike them, it does not wait for the blowing of the wind to be scattered abroad. It is so fleeting and changeful.

THE DANCE OF THE MOON FAIRY.

[The beautiful translation by B. H. Chamberlain, of the second and third parts of the lyric drama "Hagoromo" (Robe of Feathers), is an excellent illustration of the mediæval *Nô no Uta*. These dramas bear a striking resemblance to the drama of ancient Greece. In this Hagoromo, a fisherman finds on a tree on Mio beach a feather robe. The robe is claimed by a lovely maiden, a moon fairy, who regains possession of her treasure by showing to the fisherman one of the dances of the immortals.]

Chorus—Where'er we gaze the circling mists
are twining:

Perchance e'er now the moon her
tendrils fair

Celestial blossoms bear.

Those flowerets tell us that the spring
is shining—

Those fresh-blown flowerets in the
maiden's hair.

Fairy—Blest hour beyond compare

Chorus—Heaven hath its joys, but there is
beauty here

Blow, blow, ye winds! that the white
cloud-belts driven

Around my path may bar my home-
ward way;

Not yet would I return to
heaven,

But here on Mio's pine-clad shore I'd
stray,

Or where the moon in bright unclouded
glory

Shines on Kiyomi's lea,

And where on Fujiyama's summit hoary

The snows look on the sea,

While breaks the morning
merrily!

But of these three, beyond
compare

* A small orange flower. † A kind of yellow wild rose. ‡ Wistaria.

The wave-washed shore of Mio is
most fair,
When through the pines the breath of
spring is playing.

What barrier rises 'twixt the heaven
and earth?

Here too on earth the immortal gods
came straying,

And gave our monarchs birth.

Fairy— Who in this empire of the rising sun,
While myriad ages run,
Shall ever rule their bright domi-
nions,

Chorus— E'en when the feathery shock
Of fairies flitting past with silvery
pinions

Shall wear away the granite rock !
Oh magic strains that fill our ravish-
ed ears !

The fairy sings, and from the cloudy
spheres

Chiming in unison, the angels' lutes,
Tabrets and cymbals and sweet sil-
very flutes,

Ring through the heaven that glows
with purple hues,

As when Soméiro's western slope
endues

The tints of sunset, while the azure
wave

From isle to isle the pine-clad shores
doth lave.

From Ukishima's slope,—a beauteous
storm,—

Whirl down the flowers ; and still that
magic form,

Those snowy pinions, fluttering in the
light,

Ravish our souls with wonder and
delight.

Fairy— Hail to the kings that o'er the moon
hold sway !

Heaven is their home, and Buddhas
too are they.

Chorus—The fairy robes the maiden's limbs
endue

Fairy— Are, like the very heavens, of ten-
derest blue ;

Chorus—Or, like the mists of spring, all silvery
white,

Fairy— Fragrant and fair—too fair for mortal
sight !

Chorus—Dance on, sweet maiden, through the
happy hours !

Dance on, sweet maiden, while the
magic flowers

Crowning thy tresses flutter in the
wind

Raised by the waving pinions in-
tertwined !

Dance on ! for ne'er to mortal dance
'tis given

To vie with that sweet dance thou
bring'st from heaven :

And when, cloud-soaring, thou shalt
all too soon

Homeward return to the full-shining
moon,

Then hear our prayers, and from thy
bounteous hand

Pour sevenfold treasures on our happy
land ;

Bless every coast, refresh each faint-
ing field,

That earth may still her proper in-
crease yield !

But ah ! the hour, the hour of
parting rings !

Caught by the breeze, the fairy's
magic wings

Heavenward do bear her from the
pine-clad shore,

Past Ashidaka's heights, and where
are spread

The eternal snows on Fujiyama's
head,—

Higher and higher to the azure skies,
Till wandering vapours hide her from
our eyes !

THE TRUE SAMURAI.

[This illustration of the spirit of the true *samurai* is taken from a mediæval drama en-
titled "Dwarf Trees," translated by "Shinchi." The drama tells of the award made to a pov-
erty-stricken knight by the *de facto* ruler of Japan, 1190, for great kindness shown to the latter when once abroad in the garb of a men-
dicant priest. The *samurai* had sacrificed even his dwarf trees to warm his mean-looking guest.]

Tsuneyo—Hail, traveller ! Is it true that the
troops are gathering towards Kamakura ? *
Why do such immense numbers now advance
to the capital ? [Following in the train.] Why,
here are all the barons and knights of the eight
provinces of Adzuma in splendid equipment,
all aiming for Kamakura ! Their weapons are
brilliantly flashing, their armour resplendent
with silver and gold, mounted on well-fattened
horses, with numerous steeds for relief in the
train. Amid them all this poor Tsuneyo cuts a
sorry figure, with horse and weapons and all so
mean on this rough road. Doubtless they will
laugh at me, though my soul is by no means in-
ferior. Still this lean, slow horse renders the
heart's courage abortive.

* The seat of the Shogunate from 1192 to 1455.

Chorus—Though he hastens, hastens, as a quivering willow twig he is so weak, so very weak. Though he twist and pull, the horse is ill-fed; though he beat him and whack his flanks, yet he can scarcely make him budge. There is no better conveyance for him; but he eventually comes in last of all with weary weakly feet.

Saimiōji [*in state in Kamakura*—Is my attendant there?

Attendant—At your service, my lord.

Saimiōji—Have the troops arrived from all the provinces?

Attendant—All have safely come.

Saimiōji—Among the troops is a single retainer in ragged armour, with rusty spear, and leading himself a starved steed. Go find him and order him into my presence.

Attendant—Your orders shall be executed. [*Goes out.*] Any one there?

Servant—At your service, sir.

Attendant—My lord's orders are that we go out immediately, and find among the troops a samurai in battered armour, with rusty spear, leading a lean horse, and bring him at once into his august presence.

Servant—I will attend to the matter. [*Goes out and hails Tsuneyo.*] Hail! Art thou my man?

Tsuneyo—Why am I called?

Servant—Haste there; come into the presence of our Lord Saimiōji.

Tsuneyo—And am I called to appear in his august presence?

Servant—Most assuredly.

Tsuneyo—Alack, but this is unexpected! You must have mistaken your man.

Servant—Not at all: you are the man intended. The way of it is this: my lord has ordered into his presence the worst looking samurai of all the assembled armies; I have looked well over the hosts, and am sure that there is none that can compare with you for hideous appearance. So it is settled. Come, haste to the palace.

Tsuneyo—What do you say? He wants the worst-looking samurai in the army!

Servant—Most positively; those are the orders.

Tsuneyo—Then I must be the man. Go; say I'm coming.

Servant—Very well.

Tsuneyo [*approaching the palace*—Verily, this is incomprehensible. Some enemy has accused me of treason, and this being ordered into my lord's presence is but the prelude of having my head taken off. Well, I can do nothing to help it. I will go in at any risk; please show me the way.

Chorus—Then in an instant, suddenly ushered into the midst of assembled soldiers ranged like blazing stars, rank on rank of samurai of the armies, besides many other notables. Their eyes are drawn to him, and many point the scornful finger.

Tsuneyo—What is well sewed may yet be ripped.

Chorus—His old armour and rusty spear are not useless to him, nor cares he for the ridiculous figure he cuts.

[*He appears before Saimiōji.*]

Saimiōji—Ha! That is the man. [*To Tsuneyo.*] Art thou Genzaemon Tsuneyo of Sano, and hast thou forgotten the wandering priest who sought shelter of thee yon snowy night? Thou declaredst then that should trouble arise at Kamakura thou wouldst don thy battered armour, seize thy rusty spear, mount thy shadowy steed, and speed thee first of all to Kamakura. Now thou hast valiantly kept thy word; for this I admire thee. [*To the assembly.*] The object of this gathering of vassals in the capital was for no other cause than to test the truth or falsehood of Tsuneyo's words. However, if there is any person here with a grievance to state, let him now plead his cause, and judgment shall be given according to justice and law. But first of all I give judgment in the case of Tsuneyo. His former inheritance in Sano, over thirty counties, must be forthwith returned to him. Moreover, besides this, for that in the cold snow-storm he willingly cut down his precious ornamental trees to warm the stranger guest, in hope of reward in some other world, I now in return for the *ume* [plum], *sakura* [cherry], *matsu* [pine] trees, bestow upon him *Ume-da* in Kaga, *Sakura-i* in Etchu, and *Matsu-eda* in Kōdzuke, three portions as a perpetual inheritance for himself and his heirs to all generations; in

testimony whereof I now give official documents signed and sealed.

Chorus—With gladness of heart he accepts the benefactions of his lord.

Tsuneyo—Tsuneyo accepts the gifts.

Chorus—He accepts, and three times makes humble obeisance. O ye who erst laughed him to scorn, look now upon him excelling in honour. The warriors all return to their homes, and among them Tsuneyo, his face all bright with new-found joy. Now riding bravely on a gorgeous steed, away he speeds to his home in Sano of Kamitsuke with joyous heart.

THE DOMINANT NOTE OF THE LAW.

[This is one of the Buddhist "Wasan," or hymns, from the latter part of the sixteenth (?) century, written by a priest, Kwaihan; translation by the present writer. The translation follows the Japanese metre of the *naga uta*, with an anapestic cadence, each line containing two series of alternating five and seven syllable measures. Each line of the Japanese original begins with one of the syllables, in their regular order, of the *I-ro-ha* syllabary, which itself is a song embodying the thought that is the burden of this poem.]

In spending my days chasing things that are trifles,
In sowing the seed of the sixfold migration,*
I pass through the world with my life-purpose baffled.
Since gaining a birth among those that are human,
Just now I have learned that I may become godlike;
So now I seek Buddha's help, trusting the promise.
This world, after all,—it is only a dream-world;
And we, after all, are vain selves with dust mingled.
Our jealousies, angers, and scoffing reproaches
All evils we do, though disguised by our cunning,
At last become massed like the bulk of a mountain,
And we are cast down to "The River of Three Paths";†

* Man must undergo constant migration in the six worlds of 1 Hell, 2 Hungry Souls, 3 Beasts, 4 Disembodied Spirits, 5 Man, 6 Heaven, until he grasps "the Law," when he will gain "Buddhahood" and be "saved from the evils of existence."

† A river in the underworld over which the souls of the dead must go. Three paths there lead to the realms of "Demons," and the "Hungry Ones,"

A fitting reward for our self-prompted actions,
Whose ills each must bear, never blaming another.

Live I a long life,—'tis like flashing of lightning.

Live I but one life,—lo! 'tis lived in a dream-world.

Grow I into one life with wife and with children,
The love of such one life abides but a moment.
Think, how to the depths has my heart been affected!

Engrossed by my bonds to a world that is fleeting.

Naught led me to pray,—"*Namu Amida Buddha*;"‡

As wind to a horse-ear were things of the future;

Reminded of death's blast, I answered, "When comes it?"

The preacher I trusted not; thought he spoke falsely:

And so has my time sped to this very moment.
Desire I thought was for good that would follow;—

Oh! how I lament as I think of what has been.
But yet in this troubled life comes consolation:
Adorable Buddha enlightens the dark way;
Has pity on all those who live in these last days;

To all gives compassion and blessed redemption,

Whose depth or whose height passes ocean or mountain.

To Buddha's salvation so bountiful, boundless,
Thanksgiving forever;—to me it is given.

Up pointing towards heaven, down pointing 'neath heaven,§

The Buddha sheds light upon all who are living.
Now, knowing the Law as the Law has been given,

The blest triple treasure,—Rite, Priesthood, and Buddha,¶—

I lift up my song, though I sing in a dream-world,

If sorrow and knowing are both the mind's flowering,

If demon or Buddha with each is attendant,
Then let all my faith upon knowing be centred.
Up striving away from "The River of Three Paths,"

A glance at the Fullness Divine of all Goodness
Will gladden my eyes,—the reward of my striving.

Recite then the Prayer;—for by its mere virtue
Your pathway will enter the "Land of the Holy."

‡ A sacred phrase by repetition of which salvation may be gained.

§ The attitude taken by the Buddha immediately after his birth into this world.

¶ The three precious things of Buddhism—Law, Church, and Nirvana.

MODERN LITERATURE UNDER THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE.

1600-1850 A. D.

The next noteworthy event in Japan's literary history was the revival, under the early Tokugawa Shōguns, of the study of the ancient imperial records, and of the writings of the classic age. The great first Tokugawa Shōgun, Ieyasu, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, subjected and quieted the warring clans of the country. An age of peace, to last for the next two hundred and fifty years, was then entered upon. Of the most important results of the literary revival that accompanied these happy days for the State was the full maturing of a standard language for literature. What Yoshida Kenkō had begun in "Tsurezure gusa"—the amalgamation of a Chinese vocabulary with purely Japanese forms of speech—was well carried forward by the Mito school of historians towards the opening of the eighteenth century (the "Age of Genroku," 1688-1703); and as the century advanced, was perfected by accomplished critics, novelists, and dramatists of the times. To such critics as Keichiu (1640-1701), Kada (1669-1736), Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori, (1730-801), and Hirata (1776-1843), Japanese literature is indebted for elaborate critical commentaries upon the "Kojiki," the "Manyōshū," and the ancient Shinto ritual; and from them the writers of after days received models in composition and style. The novelists, especially Bakin (1767-1840), and Ikku (1763-1831), created much-prized works in fiction; Bakin, master of a style almost classical in quality, and Ikku, notwithstanding an objectionable coarseness of subjects, displaying great literary skill. In the Tokugawa period appeared, among many others, two remarkable dramatists: Takeda Izumo (1690-1756), and Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1652-1714),—the latter showing such minute analysis of the motives of human character and action that he has been called the Japanese Shakespeare.

With mention of the work of these writers this sketch of the course of Japanese literature may close. Within the last half-century the life of the Japanese people

as a whole has been subjected to a radical revolution. This secluded nation has opened its borders to free intercourse with the rest of the world. The recent history of Japanese literature, interesting though it be, is yet in largest measure but a story of the importation and adaptation of Western thought to Japanese uses. For present purposes it need not come under consideration.

Illustrative translations.

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY.

[Mabuchi, pupil of Kada and teacher of Motoori, was a voluminous writer. "His chief aim, says Sir Ernest Satow" translator of the following extract from his writings, "was to carry out the idea originated by Kada, namely to illustrate the prehistoric age." As a leader in the revival of pure Shintō, he was strongly opposed to the influences in Japan of Chinese thought. His hostility is well shown in this passage from his *Koku i-kō*]

Wherein lies the value of a rule of conduct? In its conducing to the good order of the state.

* * * While the Chinese for ages past have had a succession of different dynasties to rule over them, Japan has been faithful to one uninterrupted line of sovereigns. Every Chinese dynasty was founded upon rebellion and parricide. * * * A philosophy which produced such effects must be founded on a false system.

When Confucianism was first introduced into Japan, the simple minded natives, deceived by its plausible appearance, accepted it with eagerness and allowed it to spread its influence everywhere. The consequence was the civil war which broke out immediately after the death of Tenji Tennō in 671 between the emperor's brother and son, which only came to an end in 672 by the suicide of the latter. In the 8th century the Chinese costume and etiquette were adopted by the Court. This foreign pomp and splendour covered the rapid depravation of men's hearts and created a wide gulf between the Mikado and his people. So long as the sovereign maintains a simple style of living, the people are contented with their own hard lot. Their wants are few and they are easily ruled. But if the sovereign has a magnificent palace, gorgeous clothing, and crowds of finely dressed women to wait on him, the sight of these things

must cause in others a desire to possess themselves of the same luxuries ; or, if they are not strong enough to take them by force, it excites their envy. If the Mikado had continued to live in a house roofed with shingles, and whose walls were of mud, to wear hempen clothes, to carry his sword in a scabbard wound round with the tendrils of some creeping plant, and to go to the chase carrying his bows and arrows, as was the ancient custom, the present state of things would never have come about. But since the introduction of Chinese manners, the sovereign, while occupying a highly dignified place has been degraded to the intellectual level of a woman. The power fell into the hands of servants, and although they never actually assumed the title, they were sovereigns in fact, while the Mikado became an utter nullity.

ON PAINTING.

[This illustration of art criticism is from the "Tamagatsuma" (Wicker Basket) of Motoori, an entertaining miscellany by this modern master of Japanese prose. Professor Chamberlain, translator of the extract given here, says that "as a stylist Motoori stands quite alone amongst Japanese writers. His elegance is equalled only by his perspicuity..... This greatest scholar and writer of modern Japan" was born in Matsuzaka in Ise in the year 1730, and died in 1801. "To him more than to any other one man is due the movement which has restored the Mikado to his ancestral rights."]

The great object in painting any one is to make as true a likeness as possible of his face (that is of course the first essential), and also of his figure, and even of his very clothes. Great attention should therefore be paid to the smallest details of a portrait. Now in the present day, painters of the human face set out with no other intention than that of showing their vigour of touch, and of producing an elegant picture. The result is a total want of likeness to the subject. Indeed, likeness to the subject is not a thing to which they attach any importance. From this craving to display vigour and to produce elegant pictures there results a neglect of details. Pictures are dashed off so sketchily that not only is there no likeness to the face of the person painted, but wise and noble men are represented with an expression of countenance befitting none but rustics of the lowest

degree. This is worthy of the gravest censure. If the real features of a personage of antiquity are unknown, it should be the artist's endeavour to represent such a personage in a manner appropriate to his rank or virtues. The man of great rank should be represented as having a dignified air, so that he may appear to have been really great. The virtuous man, again, should be painted so as to look really virtuous. But far from conforming to this principle, the artists of modern times, occupied as they are with nothing but the desire of displaying their vigour of touch, represent the noble and virtuous alike as if they had been rustics or idiots.

The same ever-present desire for mere technical display makes our artists turn beautiful women's faces into ugly ones. It will perhaps be alleged that a too elegant representation of mere beauty of feature may result in a less valuable work of art ; but when it does so the fault must lie with the artist. His business is to paint the beautiful face, and at the same time *not* to produce a picture artistically inferior. In any case, fear for his own reputation as an artist is a wretched excuse for turning a beautiful face into an ugly one. On the contrary, a beautiful woman should be painted as beautiful as possible ; for ugliness repels the beholder. At the same time it often happens in such pictures as those which are sold in the Yedo shops, that the strained effort to make the faces beautiful ends in excessive ugliness and vulgarity, to say nothing of artistic degradation.

Our warlike paintings (that is, representations of fierce warriors fighting) have nothing human about the countenances. The immense round eyes, the angry nose, the great mouth, remind one of demons. Now, will any one assert that this unnatural, demoniacal fashion is the proper way to give an idea of the very fiercest warrior's look ? No ! The warrior's fierceness should indeed be depicted, but he should at the same time be recognized as a simple human being. It is doubtless to such portraits of warriors that a Chinese author alludes, when, speaking of Japanese paintings, he says that the figures in them are like those of the anthropophagous demons of Buddhist lore.

As his countrymen do not ever actually meet living Japanese, such of them as read his book will receive the impression that all our countrymen resemble demons in appearance. For though the Japanese, through constant reading of Chinese books, are well acquainted with Chinese matters,—the Chinese, who never read our literature, are completely ignorant on our score, and there can be little doubt that the few stray allusions to us that do occur are implicitly believed in. This belief of foreigners in our portraits as an actual representation of our people will have the effect of making them imagine—when they see our great men painted like rustics and our beautiful women like frights—that the Japanese men are really contemptible in appearance and all the Japanese women hideous. Neither is it foreigners alone who will be thus misled. Our own very countrymen will not be able to resist the impression that the portraits they see of the unknown heroes of antiquity do really represent those heroes' faces.

OPENING TO "GLIMPSES OF DREAMLANDS."

[This extract from the preface to one of Bakin's famous novels, published 1809-10, is part of a translation by Ludovic Mordwin, who characterizes Bakin as a rationalist of the most modern Teutonic type; and his grim satire and good-tempered cynicism remind us alternately of Carlyle and Thackeray.]

The length of man's life is fifty years, and even in ancient times men rarely reached seventy. A merely limited life is received from Heaven-and-Earth by man, but his passions have no limit. He is bound like a slave to the cent which he wears his nails to the very quick to obtain. Before the six-monthly term days arrives, payments and receipts are being briskly carried on, pleadings for grace or money, and loud lamentations; men borrowing with the meek, downcast look of a stone saint, yet rushing off to evil deeds with it whenever they grasp the desired treasure, and then repaying their loan with visage scowling like the King of Hell when he has his mouth smeared with red incense.

The popular proverb that "even in hell sins are estimated in money" is, alas! esteemed a *golden saying*. "My property," and "this or

the other man's," although receiving the titles of their owners, remain but a little time like a passing traveller who tarries for a night; for if there is income there is also expenditure. Eating and drinking, after all, are the pegs which give strength and continuity to life; and when you are really hungry perhaps nothing tastes nasty. Barbarous foreigners buy the first *bonitos* of the season with a golden *koban*, and when they have devoured them still crave for more. If you try to fare on plain rice flavoured only with tea, it will travel but about three inches down your throat, and soon all will find its way to the public boats. A tight little house that you can get your knees into is quite large enough. The grand palace of the Chinese Emperor Shikō and a straw hovel differ only in being spacious or narrow, and in being placed in the country or in the capital. If you have but a room which a single mat covers, and in which you can just manage to stretch your legs, your body will be completely protected. So, again, when you have packed your five feet of carcass into clothes, they form a convenient temporary skin to your frame, while finest brocade or the coarsest rags differ only in being brilliant or dirty. When men die and become mere clay, no one by looking at their flayed [unclothed] bodies only can tell which of them wore the grandest raiment during life. A waist-cloth made of silk crape is after all only a waist-cloth. When the true principles which ought to regulate these things have been apprehended, our shoulders and knees will no doubt be covered with such patches of all sorts and hues as may first come to hand; but when one knowing of any costly article for which he has no special purpose, strikes a bargain on the condition of two six-monthly payments, adorns himself with a borrowed wadded gown, and points his toes to the pawn-shop, it is really a most pitiful state of affairs!

According to the kind of costume they wear, men are divided into great and mean; and it follows simply the laws of etiquette in regard to the cut and colour of his clothes, putting on even tattered pants and carrying a rusty sword in his girdle, though his possessions may be slender, still he can pay his debts. Performing all the duties assigned to him by Heaven,

seizing the opportunity which a little leisure affords to turn over the green covers of an old book, viewing the ways and manners of the ancients, and resolving henceforth to mend his own ways, this is better far than purchasing pain with money. The Religion of Heaven does not give superabundantly. If a man has money he may have no children to bestow it upon; if his family is large his means may be small; handsome men are often fools, ugly men clever; taking sorts of fellows are frequently lascivious, and men poor in speech are strong in will.

CLOSING SCENE FROM THE "CHIUSHINGURA."

[This story, "Chiushingura," records the celebrated fidelity of the "Forty-seven Ronin," the great heroes of feudal Japan, 1701-2. Translation by F. Victor Dickins. It embodies the dearest ideals of a large part of the Japanese people. In dramatic form it is repeatedly rendered in Japanese theatres. Mr. Dickins's translation follows the modified text of a famous dramatist, Takeda Izumo, who shares with Chikamatsu a wide popularity.]

Another moment, and the body of Moronao lay on the floor, covered with wounds.

The conspirators crowded round it, wild with excitement, shouting:—

"Oh, rare sight! Oh, happy fortune! Happy are we as the *moki* when he found his waif,† fortunate as though we gazed upon the flower of the *udonge*, that blossoms but once in three thousand years."

But to you—to you, fell the glory of finding him, and it was you who dragged him here alive, into our presence. 'Twas a good deed, Yazama, acceptable to the spirit of our master; each of us would fain have been the doer of it. Comrades, say I not well?"

Yoshida assented on behalf of the rest.

"Delay not, Yazama," resumed Yuranosuke, for time flies fast."

"If it must be so," cried Yazama, as he passed forward uttering *gomen** in a low tone, and offered incense first of the company.

"And next our chief," exclaimed Yoshida.

† Some drift-wood by which this sea-tortoise (*moki*) saw the light it had longed in vain to see for three thousand years.

* "Pardon me" (for going forward).

"Nay," said the *Karō*, "there is yet one who should pass before me."

"What man can that be?" asked Yoshida wonderingly, while his comrades echoed his words.

The *Karō*, without replying, drew a purse made of striped stuff from his bosom. "He who shall precede me," cried the *Karō*, "is Hayano Kampei. A negligence of his duty as a vassal prevented him from being received into our number; but, eager to take at least a part in the erection of a monument to his liege lord, he sold away his wife, and thus became able to furnish his share toward the expense. As his father-in-law had the money, and was murdered, and I caused the subscription to be returned to him, mad with despair he committed *seppuku* and died—a most miserable and piteous death. All my life I shall never cease to regret having caused the money to be returned to him; never for a moment will be absent from my memory that through my fault he came to so piteous an end. During this night's struggle the purse has been among us, borne by Heiyemon. Let the latter pass forward, and in the name of his sister's dead husband, burn incense before the tablet of our lord."

Heiyemon, thus addressed, passed forward, exclaiming, "From amidst the shadows of the tall grass blades the soul of Kampei thanks you for the unlooked-for favour you confer upon him." Laying the purse upon the censor, he added:—

"Tis Hayano Kampei who, second in turn, offers incense before the tablet of his liege lord."

The remainder followed, offering up in like manner—amid loud cries of grief, and with sobs and tears, and trembling in the anguish of their minds—incense before the tablet of their master.

Cutting off their enemy's head with the dagger with which their dead master had committed *seppuku*,* they resumed their orgy, exclaiming:—

"We deserted our wives, we abandoned our children, we left our aged folk-uncared for, all

* Suicide by *hara kiri*, or cutting open the abdomen.

to obtain this one head. How auspicious a day is this!

They struck at the head in their frenzy, gnashed at it, shed tears over it; their grief and fury, poor wretches, beggared description.

Yuranosuke, drawing from his bosom the *ihait*† of his dead master, placed it reverently on a small stand at the upper end of the room; and then set the head of Moronao, cleansed from blood, on another opposite to it. He next took a perfume from within his helmet, and burnt it before the tablet of his lord, prostrating himself and withdrawing slowly, while he bowed his head reverently three times, and then again thrice three times.

"O thou soul of my liege lord, with awe doth thy vassal approach thy mighty presence, who art now like unto him that was born of the lotos-flower,‡ to attain a glory and eminence beyond the understanding of men! Before the sacred tablet tremblingly set I the head of thine enemy, severed from his corpse by the sword thou deignedst to bestow upon thy servant in the hour of thy last agony. O thou that art now resting amid the shadows of the tall grass, look with favour on my offering." Bursting into tears, the *Karō* of Yenya thus adored the memory of his lord.

"And now, comrades," he resumed after a pause, "advance each of you, one after the other, and burn incense before the tablet of your master."

"We would all," cried Yoshida, "venture to ask our chief first among us to render that honour to our lord's memory."

"Nay," answered the *Karō*, "'tis not I who of right should be first. Yazama Jiutarō, to you of right falls that honour."

"Not so," cried Yazama: "I claim no such favour. Others might think I had no right to it, and troubles might thus arise."

"No one will think that," exclaimed Yuranosuke. "We have all freely ventured our lives in the struggle to seize Moronao."

Suddenly the air is filled with the din of the trampling of men, with the clatter of hoofs, and with the noise of war drums.

Yuranosuke does not change a feature.

"'Tis the retainers of Moronao who are coming down upon us: why should we fight with them?"

The *Karō* is about to give the signal to his comrades to accomplish the final act of their devotion, by committing *seppuku* in memory of their lord, when Momonoi Wakasanosuke appears upon the scene, disordered with the haste he had used, in his fear of being too late.

"Moroyasu, the young brother of Moronao, is already at the great gate," cries Momonoi. "If you commit *seppuku* at such a moment it will be said that you were driven to it by fear, and an infamous memory will attach to your deed. I counsel you to depart hence without delay, and betake yourselves to the burial-place of your lord, the Temple of Kōmyō."

"So shall it be," answered Yuranosuke after a pause. "We will do as you counsel us, and will accomplish our last hour before the tomb of our ill-fated lord. We would ask you, Sir Wakasanosuke, to prevent our enemies from following us."

Hardly had Yuranosuke concluded, when Yakushiji Jiōzayemon and Sagisaka Bannai suddenly rushed forth from their hiding-places, shouting.—"Oboshi, villain, thou shalt not escape!" and struck right and left at the *Karō*. Without a moment's delay Rikiya hastened to his father's assistance, and forced the wretches to turn their weapons against himself. The struggle did not last long. Avoiding a blow aimed at him by Yakushiji, Rikiya cut the fellow down, and left him writhing in mortal agony upon the ground. Bannai met with a similar fate. A frightful gash upon the leg brought him to his knee,—a pitiable spectacle enough,—and a few moments afterward the wretch breathed his last.

"A valiant deed, a valiant deed!"

Forever and ever shall the memory endure of these faithful clansmen; and in the earnest hope that the story of their loyalty—full bloom of the bamboo leaf*—may remain a bright example as long as the dynasty of our rulers shall last, has the foregoing tale of their heroism been writ down.

† Tablet holding the posthumous name of the dead, and date of death.

‡ Buddha.

* The name of each heir to the Tokugawa Shōgunate contained the name *take* (bamboo).

LITERATURE IN JAPAN.

We may take a glance, in passing, at the literature of Japan in general considered. As a whole, it has been for the greater part Chinese in language and script. As distinctly Japanese, this literature has had in fact only one period of dominance and high excellence—that lying between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries. The eighteenth-century literary revival was not a return to either the *kana* writing or to the native language of the classics; it was at the best an extension of the Chinese vocabulary, and the amalgamation of Chinese ideographs with the *kana* script in sentences that were Japanese in idiom and in construction. The Japanese literature of modern times has consequently been a composite of Chinese and Japanese words and writing. Chinese literature as affected by Japanese writers is at the present day rapidly decreasing in mass and in value.

Looked at as literature only, literature in Japan is exceedingly voluminous. It exists as extensive libraries of history, State records, and private historical digests; as regulations of court ceremonial; as codifications and commentaries upon civil and other law; as statements and expositions of doctrine and rituals for Shintō and Buddhism in religion, and of the ethics of Confucianism; as treatises upon Chinese philosophies; as biographies, records of travel, and works in fiction; as disquisitions on art; as general encyclopædias of topography, zoölogy, botany, and other departments of natural phenomena; as dramatic works; as records of folk-lore; and though last, by no means the least in mass, as poetry and comment upon the poems.

PRINTING IN JAPAN.

The art of printing, as block-printing, was brought to Japan as early as the eighth century. Printing from movable types was known at the end of the fourteenth century. In the seventeenth century the use of the press became general, and large quantities of the manuscripts hoarded for centuries reappeared as printed books, increasing in numbers until in recent times they have become one of the common possessions of the people throughout the empire.

II.

CONTENT AND VALUE OF JAPANESE LITERATURE.

Turning now from the history of Japanese literature, let us look for a moment at its content. How shall we characterize this? What is its value?

At the outset it must be acknowledged that in general the literature of Japan does not abound in matter of direct or living interest to Western readers. It had its springs in conditions and circumstances very different from those of the literature of the Occident. Its references to custom, to historic events, to personages and places of tradition, introduce the European and American reader into an environment almost wholly unfamiliar. Its motives for action, its praise and censure of conduct, are governed by standards which in many ways are unlike those dominant in the life of far-away peoples. Then its modes of expression have scarcely anything in common with the ways of speech to which the mind of the West has become habituated, and which the Western mind enjoys. In fact, the Occidental reader, generally speaking, has neither the requisite mental habit and intelligence, nor the peculiar mood, needed for an appreciative interest in the literature of the Japanese.

It would be injustice however to much that is of real value, to turn this judgment into a sweeping condemnation. Japanese literature is strange and alien; it is to the dweller in the West, as a rule, dull and unmeaning; its speech is painstakingly minute, dwelling upon details that in European speech are passed with hardly a touch,—the verboseness dragging its way through sentences that seem at times interminable. And then, in much that must be accepted as literature proper, as the *belles-lettres* of the Japanese, there is a free display of thought and act forbidden in recent centuries by the moral standard of the approved literature of the West. But this literature holds the records of a peculiar and extensive mythology and folk-lore; it shows the origin and development of a unique system of government; it exhibits the elaboration of a social order of remarkable stability, and the operation of society under a system of ceremonial etiquette in the

highest degree complex and refined. In this literature the ethnologist, the psychologist, the student of comparative religion, the art critic, the historian, and often the general reader, can find much pleasant entertainment and profitable study. There is in it, notwithstanding a mass of dull, prolix, and profitless matter, a considerable contribution to the world's means of diversion and stores of knowledge. The reader, it must be said, will look in vain into Japanese literature for intellectual creativeness or invention. The Japanese mind is characteristically neither original nor adventurous. In Japanese history, no philosophy or science has been started or been much advanced. From a remote past the people of this empire have been learners and followers of nations endowed as pioneers and discoverers. Their genius for the most part has lain in the appropriation and refinement of the gains first made by others. Accepting their monarchy as a direct descent of heavenly power into the lower world, the Japanese from ancient times have subordinated themselves to it under the sway of the twin chief virtues of the Confucian ethics, loyalty and filial piety. Under the influence of these principles a social order was developed, marked by a devotion to emperor, lord, parent, and to all superiors in the relations of man with man, that showed a self-abnegation such as has probably never been seen among any other people. Accompanying this universal social systematization was a ceremonial refinement, a graceful complexity of etiquette, developed with consummate excellence, and dominating even the humblest parts of the civil and domestic organism. As results of their social discipline, the Japanese as a people long ago accepted life as they were born to it, without disturbing impatience or restless ambition; they achieved great contentment with but small means for self-gratification; and they were prepared to yield life itself with a readiness almost unknown among self-assertive peoples. The learning of Japan—that is, the religion really directing the people, Buddhism; the principles and much of the detail of their law; whatever might be classed as science and philosophy—was received from

abroad. Among the Japanese these things gained elaboration and in most of their relations received refinement with the lapse of the centuries. Hardly any of the industries, and we may say none of the fine arts, were originated by this people. The Japanese however have carried such interests, their arts especially, to degrees of excellence that have drawn to them universal admiration. Of all this and of much else, Japanese literature bears good record, and therefore has noteworthy interest and value to the peoples of remote lands.

JAPANESE POETRY.

In one department of letters, however, it may be said that the Japanese have wrought from a beginning, and have produced results that are specifically their own. Their poetry had its origin in a pre-historic age, and it has had a culture down to the present day distinctively individual and unique. Much Chinese poetry has been written in Japan, and by Japanese writers; but, unlike prose, Japanese verse has never been subjected to Chinese ways of thought and expression.

The cadence of Japanese poetry, Mr. Aston says, "is not marked by a regular succession of accented syllables, as in English." It has, says Prof. Chamberlain, neither "rhyme, assonance, alliteration, accentual stress, quantity, nor parallelism." These judgments are true, but with some qualifications. It is true that Japanese verse has normally an irregular cadence, yet much of it may easily receive, and often does receive, in the reading the movement of some of the simpler measures of English poetry. It is common, for example, to hear such verses as the following read as though they were composed in trochaic movement;—

Nikumarete

Nikumi kaesu na

Nikumarero.

Nikumi nikumare

Hateshi nakereba.

Hated though you be,

Hate for hate do not return;

Hatred given accept.

If for hatred you give hate

Then to hating comes no end.

So, in the original of the *I-ro-ha* Buddhist hymn, given, above, the *Nori*

no Hatsu-ne, "The Dominant Note of the Law," its lines generally take the rhythm of English anapestic verse as:—

*Itasura goto ni hi wo kasane ;
Rokushiyu ruten no lane wo maki ;
Hakanaku kono yo wo sugosū nari, etc.*

In spending my days chasing things that are trifles ;

In sowing the seed of the six-fold migration ;
I pass through the world with my life-purpose baffled, &c.

However, the prosody dominant in Western poetry does not possess the poetry of Japan except, we may say, through the influence of a natural but unacknowledged rhythmic instinct. In large part, as Mr. Aston says, "it is only distinguished from prose by metre." In form, as noted before, Japanese poetry is peculiar in consisting generally of alternations of verses composed of five and seven syllables. "Lines of three, four, six and eight syllables," says Mr. Aston, "may be found in the oldest poetry,—but these variations are not intentional, and in singing or chanting the proper length of the lines is preserved." The standard model for compositions is the *tanka*, the five versed stanza of which quite a number of illustrative translations have already been given. Usually the *tanka* may be divided into two complete parts, the "first" or "upper" three lines, and the "second" or "lower" two. The reputed most ancient song treasured in Japanese tradition, the song of the god Susa-no-o, sung at the building of the bridal palace for a celestial pair, is the prototype of this popular measure. "When this Great Deity first built the palace of Suga," says the 'Kojiki' "clouds rose up thence. Then he made an august song. That song said:—

*'Yakumo tatsu ;
Isumo yae gaki ;
Tsuma gomi ni
Yae gaki tsukuru :
Sono yae gaki wo !'*

This is, in somewhat free translation:—

"Many clouds appear :
Eightfold clouds a barrier raise
Round the wedded pair.
Manifold the clouds stand guard ;
Oh that eightfold barrier-ward !"

Besides the *tanka* there are numerous variations in arrangement of the funda-

mental five and seven syllable verses, but the limits of this paper prevent their illustration. There are, however, two, extremes of composition that may be noticed in passing, the *naga-uta*, or "long-song," and the *hokku* or "first part." The *naga-uta* is indefinite in length. It is made up of couplets of the two kinds of syllables, the end of the poem being in an additional seven syllable verse. The legend of "Urashima Taro" given above is a good example of this kind of poetry. The *hokku* is a complete poem contained in only the seventeen syllables that make up the first three lines or "part" of the *tanka*. Necessarily it must be an exceedingly compact bit of word and thought skill to be worth anything—as literature.

The following *hokku*, which is also an acrostic of the word *yutaka* "fruitfulness," "abundance"—is a good illustration of its kind.

*Yufudachi ya
Ta wo mi-meguri no
Kami naraba*

If the summer shower
Would but round the rice-fields go
As it were a god !

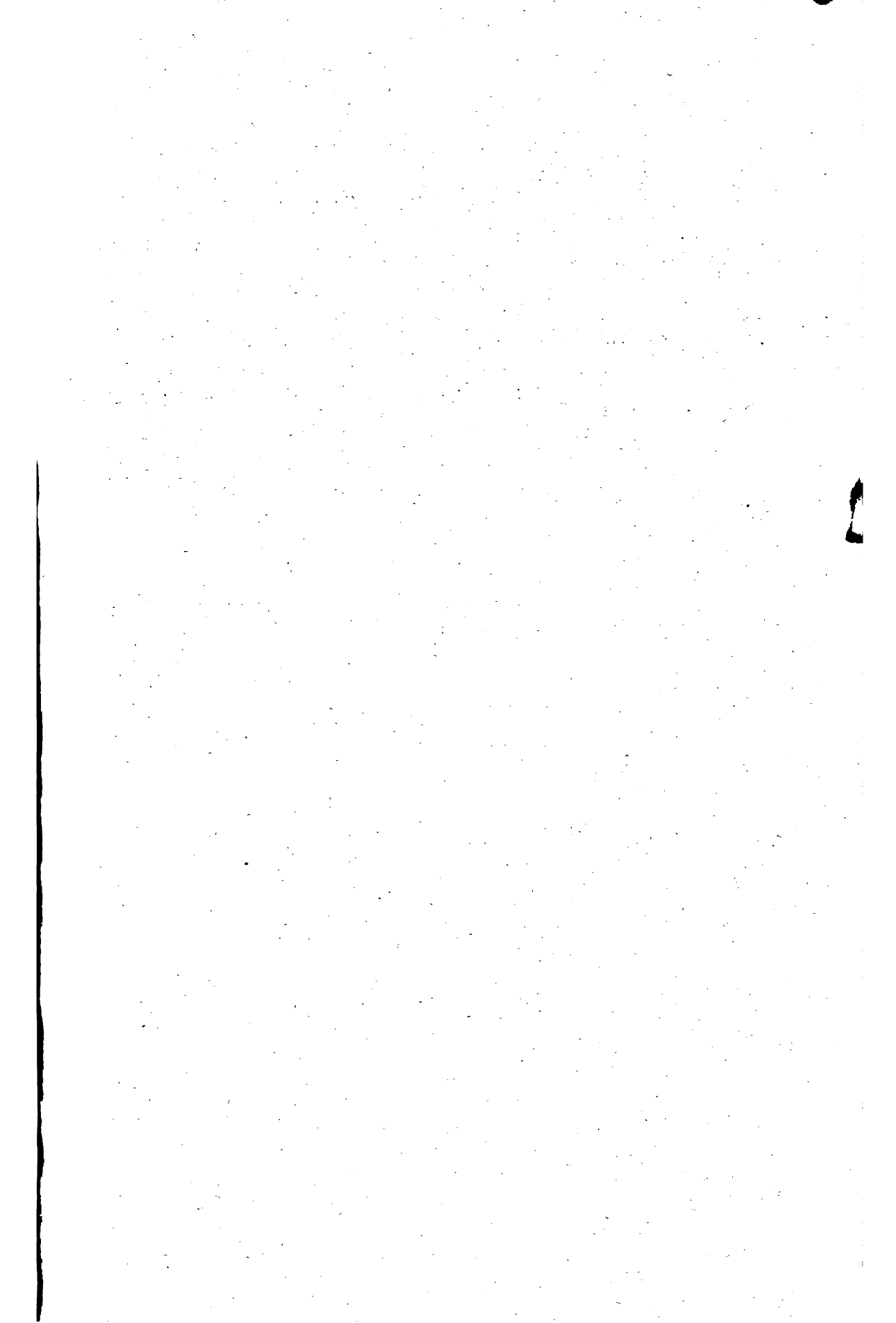
In the construction of Japanese verse there are certain special oddities, such as redundant expletives, and phrases called "Pillow-words" and "Introductions." These expressions are purely conventional ornaments or euphonisms. Much of the superior merit of this verse-writing depends also upon a serious use of puns and of other word-plays. The "Pillow-words," says Prof. Chamberlain, are "as a rule, simply epithets that were formerly applied quite naturally and appropriately to various objects, places and actions, but which in most cases, by the process of phonetic decay, by being used in connection with expressions having but a very distant affinity to the expressions they originally served to define," &c., "have become almost unrecognizable and practically devoid of meaning." "They are prefixed to other words merely for the sake of euphony. Almost every word of note has some "Pillow-word." An "Introduction" is shown in the third song above, taken from the *Hyaku-nin-issshū*. Speaking of these and the other word plays special to Japan-

ese serious poetry, Prof. Chamberlain remarks : " There is nothing in the nature of things constraining us to associate plays upon words with the ridiculous. Each literature must be a law unto itself."

The subject matter of the poetry of the Japanese, to characterize it generally, is simple and serene emotion in reference to person or nature. And,—still broadly characterizing it,—its quality is daintiness; its mood is meditation. Poetic imagination, as known in the West, has no place in Japanese verse; instead, the verse is given over to lyric fancies. It is conventional, suggestive, impressionist, like Japanese painting. It is not a chosen means for sounding and recording the depths of profound spiritual experience. It has never been the vehicle of an epic.

Leaving now this sketch of our subject, we are constrained to say in general judgment upon Japanese literature, so far as it has been disclosed, that it can not be given place among the great achievements of the human intellect. However, this

fact is not to be wondered at. The limitations that have prevented its expansion into a larger and more commanding worth have almost of necessity surrounded it. The people of this empire—from time immemorial isolated in the farthest East; dependent for their letters, laws, philosophy, religious faith, ethics, science, industrial and fine arts, upon their neighbours of the continent; also hitherto denied by nature the creative or inventive genius—as a matter of course have been unable to go far or to rise to any great height in literary achievement. What they may hereafter do, no one can foretell. To-day they are living in an environment unlike any they have before known. Japan is now in intimate intercourse with the whole world. The Japanese people are now appropriating with marvellous speed the civilization of Europe and America. What may be called a world-consciousness and culture is becoming dominant among them. To what heights they may reach, actuated by this power; to what grand goal they may yet move, the future only can show.



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